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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 030223

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN SHOULD READ 030223 VICE 030233)

FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 1542 ACTION SECSTATE

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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1542

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT UR US

SUBJECT: U.S. SOVIET POLICY UNDER THE CARTER

ADMINISTRATION:

1. THE USSR IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE KEY QUESTION IN ASSESSING THE
LIKELY MIX OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE WITHIN THE USSR
OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS IS THE STABILITY OF THE BREZHNEV
LEADERSHIP AND THE DURABILITY OF ITS PRESENT DOMESTIC
AND FOREIGN POLICIES. AFTER SURVEYING THE PROBABLE
COURSE OF THE USSR DURING THIS PERIOD, IN TERMS OF/
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(1) THE MEN AT THE TOP, (2) POTENTIAL FORCES FOR CHANGE,
AND (3) CONTINUITY IN POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BASIC
POLICIES, WE CONCLUDE THAT CHANGES IN STYLE AND EMPHASIS ARE
MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN SHIFTS IN POLICY ORIENTATION, EVEN IF
BREZHNEV HIMSELF PLAYS A LESS ACTIVE ROLE OR LEAVES THE SCENE
ALTOGETHER. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON DEALING WITH
SEVERAL MAJOR CHALLENGES AS WELL AS MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES THAT
THE SOVIET SYSTEM IS LIKELY TO POSE TO U.S. DIPLOMACY
IN THE COMING FOUR YEARS. --OUTLINES BELOW-- FOLLOW BY SEPTELS.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE MEN AT THE TOP. GIVEN THE PATTERN OF LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED THE SOVIET SYSTEM SINCE BREZHNEV'S ASCENSION TO THE TOP OF THE PARTY IN 1964--SIX OF THE 15 FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS ARE NOW OVER 70, AND HAVE SPENT MANY YEARS AT THE PINNACLE OF POWER--A BET ON MORE OF THE SAME SEEMS SAFE, ASSUMING THAT THE SENIOR LEADERS WILL BE PHYSICALLY ABLE TO CARRY ON FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS OR MORE. BREZHNEV HIMSELF HAS SEEMED IN GOOD SHAPE THIS FALL AND WINTER, AS MOST RECENTLY EVIDENCED BY HIS STRONG PERFORMANCE IN PRESENTING THE "HERO" AWARD TO THE CITY OF TULA. WE HAVE SEEN NO CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT HE IS PLANNING TO RELINQUISH POLITICAL POWER IN THE NEAR FUTURE BECAUSE OF ILL HEALTH. YET THE ACTUARIAL ODDS FAVOR HIS PASSING FROM THE SCENE WITHIN FOUR YEARS.

3. BREZHNEV APPEARS TO BE ESSENTIALLY A CONSENSUS POLITICIAN WHO IS WILLING TO CONSIDER CONTENDING POINTS OF VIEW AND TO ACCOMMODATE MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL INTERESTS (I.E., THE IDEOLOGUES, THE MILITARY, THE PARTY APPARATUS, THE MANAGERS AND TECHNICIANS). IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES (SHELEST, VORONOV, SHELEPIN, AND POLYANSKIY) HAVE BEEN OUSTED FROM THE POLITBURO. WE DOUBT THAT ANY OF THE PRESENT POLITBURO MEMBERS STRONGLY OPPOSES BREZHNEV'S CONTINUING

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AS GENERAL SECRETARY FOR AS LONG AS HE IS UP TO THE JOB PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. IN SHORT, WE ARE NOT FACING AN IMMEDIATE PERIOD OF POLITICAL TRANSITION; IT IS NOT YET CLEAR HOW BREZHNEV AND HIS SUPPORTERS INTEND TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM, IF AT ALL; BUT WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE BREZHNEV'S BEING OUSTED FOR POLICY REASONS.

4. SHOULD BREZHNEV, FOR WHATEVER REASON, LEAVE OFFICE DURING THE COMING FOUR YEARS, HIS PRESENT UNOFFICIAL DEPUTY AND CLOSE COLLEAGUE KIRILENKO IS BEST POSITIONED TO TAKE OVER. KIRILENKO SEEMS TO BE IN REASONABLE HEALTH, ALTHOUGH AT AGE 70 (HE IS ABOUT FOUR MONTHS OLDER THAN BREZHNEV) HE COULD NOT ASPIRE TO SERVE AS GENERAL SECRETARY FOR MORE THAN A FEW YEARS.

5. AT THE NEXT RUNG DOWN THE PARTY LADDER--ASSUMING THAT KOSYGIN (AGE 73), PODGORNYY (AGE 74) AND SUSLOV (AGE 74) ARE NOT HUNGRY FOR THE TOP JOB--IS FYODOR KULAKOV, WHO AT 59 IS THE ONLY FULL POLITBURO MEMBER, NOT IN HIS LATE 60'S OR 70'S, WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE CPSU SECRETARIAT. BEST KNOWN AS OVERSEER OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE, KULAKOV BROADENED HIS IMAGE LAST YEAR BY HEADING CPSU DELEGATIONS TO CP CONGRESSES IN

BULGARIA AND MONGOLIA. HE WAS ALSO SELECTED TO GIVE THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS FOR THE 1976 OCTOBER REVOLUTION CELEBRATION. KULAKOV IS WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE A LOYAL BREZHNEV SUPPORTER.

6. AS DARK HORSES:

-- USTINOV, 68, FULL POLITBURO MEMBER SINCE THE 25TH CONGRESS, MINISTER OF DEFENSE SINCE GRECHKO'S DEATH LAST APRIL, AND AT LEAST NOMINALLY STILL A MEMBER OF THE CPSU CC SECRETARIAT (SINCE 1965). HE IS THOUGHT TO BE A BREZHNEV SUPPORTER, WITHOUT BEING ANY MAN'S CLIENT;
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--RELATIVE OUTSIDERS UKRAINIAN PARTY BOSS SHCHERBITSKIY, 59, AND LENINGRAD OBKOM PARTY BOSS ROMANOV, 54. BOTH ARE FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS, BUT NEITHER IS PRESENTLY IN THE SECRETARIAT AND NEITHER HAS HAD A MOSCOW-BASED POSITION. SHCHERBITSKIY IS A BREZHNEV PROTEGE; ROMANOV HAS FLOURISHED DURING BREZHNEV'S RULE BUT SEEMS TO HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SENIOR IDEOLOGUE AND FORMER LENINGRADER SUSLOV.

7. POTENTIAL FORCES FOR CHANGE. AT THE MOMENT WE SEE NO STORM BREWING WITHIN SOVIET SOCIETY WHICH COULD IN THE COMING FOUR YEARS FORCE A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE USSR'S PRESENT COURSE OR CAUSE AN UPHEAVAL WITHIN THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP. THE SYSTEM DOES HAVE DEEPLY ROOTED PROBLEMS. IT IS BURDENED BY AN UNIMAGINATIVE, CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP. BY OUTMODED INSTITUTIONS AND AN INERT POPULACE ONLY marginally stirred by drum-beating about building COMMUNISM AND CREATING A NEW SOVIET MAN. THE LEADERSHIP CANNOT AFFORD TO RE-INSTITUTE STALINIST TERROR TACTICS IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONFORMITY. IT HAS BY ITS OWN ADMISSION LARGELY EXHAUSTED THE POSSIBILITIES OF EXTENSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH BUT HAS THUS FAR BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN SUSTAINING HIGH GROWTH RATES BY SHIFTING TO INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT. DECADES OF EMPHASIS UPON HEAVY INDUSTRY AND CORRESPONDING NEGLECT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE CONSUMER SECTOR HAVE SEVERELY LIMITED THE LEADERSHIP'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE THE WORK FORCE WITH EFFECTIVE MATERIAL INCENTIVES. PARTICULARLY IN THE EVENT OF MAJOR CLIMATE-INDUCED GRAIN SHORTFALLS, THESE SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS COULD BE EXACERBATED BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS IN 1977-80, FOR EXAMPLE:

--INTRODUCTION OF COMPLEX TECHNOLOGY, NECESSARY TO BOOST LABOR PRODUCTIVITY, WILL NOT BE FULLY EFFECTIVE WITHOUT TRULY SUBSTANTIAL MODIFICATION OF A SYSTEM WHICH BETTER RESPONDS TO THE TRADITIONALEMPHASIS ON VOLUME RATHER
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THAN TO THE RECENT STRESS ON HIGHER QUALITY AND MORE COST-EFFECTIVE PRODUCTION: SUCH MODIFICATION IS NOT YET ON THE HORIZON;

--ABLE MANAGERS AND TECHNICIANS WILL REMAIN FRUSTRATED AT THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP TO REFORM THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT MARKET FACTORS AND TO UNDERTAKE OTHER LONG OVERDUE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES WHICH WOULD PERMIT SOME ELEMENT OF DECENTRALIZED ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING;

--INSISTENCE ON IDEOLOGICAL CONFORMITY AS DECREED FROM MOSCOW WILL PRODUCE NEW DISSIDENTS, PRIMARILY IN THE FIELDS OF RELIGION, NATIONALITY, ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND THE EXERCISE OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

-- THE GENERATION GAP, BETWEEN THOSE WHO FONDLY RECALL WARTIME PATRIOTISM AND THE POSTWAR GENERATION FOR WHOM THE WEST IS MORE INTRIGUING THAN THREATENING, WILL WIDEN; OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS (EXODUS OF TALENTED YOUTH FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE; SLOW POPULATION GROWTH IN THE LABOR-DEFICIT NORTHWEST AND EASTERN REGIONS, AND RAPID GROWTH IN THE LABOR-SURPLUS SOUTH) WILL CONTINUE TO COMPLICATE REGIME PROGRAMS.

8. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOVIET SYSTEM POSSESSES SUBSTANTIAL INHERENT STRENGTH:

-- BARRING A SUCCESSION OF DISASTROUS CROP YEARS, THE AVERAGE SOVIET CITIZEN WILL PLOD ON STOICALLY, SUSTAINED BY A FUNDAMENTAL PRIDE IN HIS COUNTRY, RECOGNITION THAT LIVING CONDITIONS HAVE IMPROVED OVER THE YEARS, AND BELIEF THAT THINGS WILL BE BETTER IN COMING YEARS;

-- CONTINUITY IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS
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HAS RESULTED IN A REMARKABLE SINGLE-MINDEDNESS THROUGHOUT SOVIET PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALDOM;

--WHILE DISSENT WILL BE AN IRRITANT TO THE KREMLIN, PARTICULARLY IN THE CSCE CONTEXT, THE TINY NUMBER OF DISSIDENTS LACKS INTERNAL COHESION, AND DOES NOT ENJOY MASS SUPPORT OR EVEN MASS SYMPATHY; WE SEE NO EVIDENCE THAT INTERNAL DISSIDENCE WILL STRENGTHEN TO THE POINT OF FORCING A REORIENTATION OF SOVIET INTERNAL POLICY IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

9. CONTINUITY IN POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BASIC POLICIES.
THE CURRENT PARTY LEADERSHIP GIVES EVERY APPEARANCE OF

SHARING A WELL-DEFINED SET OF CONVICTIONS ABOUT CONTEMPORARY WORLD HISTORY AND THE SOVIET UNION'S PLACE IN IT. DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES--WHILE THEY BOVIOUSLY HAVE CHANGED GREATLY SINCE 1917--REMAIN IMPORTANT IN THIS SYSTEM. AS INDICATED ABOVE, WE DOUBT THAT POLITICAL SUCCESSION WILL IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE BRING SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS IN THIS WORLD VIEW, OR IN THE FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES WHICH STEM FROM IT AND HAVE CHARACTERIZED THE 12 YEARS OF BREZHNEV'S REIGN. SINCE THE NON-INNOVATIVE, TRADITION-MINDED NATURE OF THE BREZHNEV REGIME IS NOT LIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, WE FEEL REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THE BASIC ATTITUDES OUTLINED BELOW WILL CHARACTERIZE THE OUTLOOK OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP DURING 1977-80, AND BEYOND.

10. THE CURRENT PILLARS OF SOVIET POLITICAL FAITH ARE THE FOLLOWING:

-- WORLD POLITICS IS DOMINATED BY TWO "WORLD SYSTEMS," THE SOCIALIST (LED BY THE USSR) AND THE CAPITALIST (LED BY THE U.S.);

--THESE SYSTEMS ARE MUTUALLY ANTITHETICAL BECAUSE
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OF THE CLASS INTERESTS EACH REPRESENTS (I.E., THE DYNAMIC, PEACE-LOVING "WORLD PROLETARIAT" VERSUS OUTMODED BUT STILL DANGEROUS "IMPERIALISTS");

-- THE ESSENTIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO SYSTEMS, AS WELL AS BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF EACH SYSTEM, IS ANTAGONISTIC, AND IS DESTINED TO BE RESOLVED OVER A LENGTHY HISTORICAL PERIOD IN FAVOR OF SOCIALISM, BY "CLASS STRUGGLE";

--"PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" DESCRIBES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTRIES OF THE TWO SYSTEMS "ALWAYS DESIRED" BY THE USSR; ITS CORE MEANING IS THAT IN THE NUCLEAR AGE THE INEVITABLE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE SYSTEMS MUST AVOID MILITARY MEANS, AND, IF THEIR USE IS NECESSARY, THEY MUST BE USED WITH CAUTION TO AVOID MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH THE U.S.

11. IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP'S VIEW OF THE WORLD, THREE TYPES OF ACTORS INHABIT THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE: "SOCIALISTS", "CAPITALISTS," AND PEOPLES OF THE THIRD WORLD WHO ARE EITHER STILL EXPLOITED BY CAPITALISM OR HAVE MANAGED TO WIN SOME INDEPENDENCE FROM IT. THE CPSU'S BASIC GOALS ARE ELABORATED IN ACCORD WITH THESE CATEGORIES. AS SPELLED OUT IN NUMEROUS POLICY STATEMENTS OVER THE PAST 12 YEARS (MOST RECENTLY AT THE 25TH CONGRESS LAST FEBRUARY), THESE GOALS, IN BRIEF, ARE TO:

--ENSURE, TOGETHER WITH OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES,
FAVORABLE INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS FOR BUILDING SOCIALISM
AND COMMUNISM WITHIN THE "SOCIALIST SYSTEM";
X -- MOVE THE USSR TOWARD FULL COMMUNISM BY SUSTAINED
ECONOMIC GROWTH STEMMING PRIMARILY FROM MODERNIZATION
OF HEAVY INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE:

-- MAXIMIZE UNITY AND POLICY COORDINATION AMONG
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SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, WITH AN EYE TO GRADUAL ECONOMIC
INTEGRATION (IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, THE NEED TO DRAW ON
AND PAY FOR WESTERN TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT, TOGETHER
WITH THE ENHANCED VALUE OF SOVIET RAW MATERIALS, COMPLICATES
THE SIMULTANEOUS PURSUIT OF "SOCIALIST ECONOMIC INTEGRATION"

--SUPPORT NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AMONG
THIRD WORLD PEOPLES, ASSIST DEVELOPING THIRD WORLD
NATIONS, PARTICULARLY THOSE RADICAL STATES WHICH HAVE A
"SOCIALIST ORIENTATION," AND HELP-NON-RULING CP'S
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD;

--UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLE OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE
BETWEEN STATES OF THE TWO WORLD SYSTEMS AND PURSUE A
"PEACE PROGRAM" FEATURING DISARMAMENT MEASURES, WHILE
"ADMINISTERING A RESOLUTEREBUFF TO THE AGGRESSIVE
FORCES OF IMPERIALISM" (FOR EXAMPLE, MULTI-NATIONAL
CORPORATIONS SEEKING THIRD WORLD AND OCEANIC RESOURCES)
AND "DELIVERING MANKIND FROM A NEW WORLD WAR."

12. THE SOVIET VIEW OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE
SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS NO SINGLE WORD OR PHRASE, COMPARABLE
TO AMERICAN USAGE OF THE TERM "DETENTE," TO LABEL THE
U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. WHEN THE U.S. ADOPTED
"DETENTE" TO DESCRIBE U.SA-USSR RELATIONS, THE SOVIETS
BEGAN THEIR CURRENT PRACTICE OF TRANSLATING
THE TERM AS "RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION."
BUT THE KREMLIN VIEWS THIS RELATIONSHIP AS PART OF ITS
GENERAL CONCEPTION OF WORLD POLITICS. SPECIFICALLY:

--"RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION" IS SEEN
AS AN ATTRIBUTE RATHER THAN AN ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE
OF "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE";

-- THE PHRASE PERTAINS PRIMARILY TO TENSION BETWEEN
SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST STATES (RELATIONS BETWEEN
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SOCIALIST COUNTRIES ARE GOVERNED BY "SOCIALIST INTER-

NATIONALISM," WHILE RELATIONS WITH THE THIRD WORLD AND THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS ARE GENERALLY GOVERNED BY "PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM", WHICH INCLUDES THE OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AS WELL AS CLASS STRUGGLE WITHIN CAPITALIST STATES);

-- THE KREMLIN SEES NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN PURSUING RELAXATION OF EAST-WEST TENSION ON THE ONE HAND, AND ENCOURAGING "NATIONAL LIBERATION" MOVEMENTS AND "CLASS STRUGGLE" ON THE OTHER; INDEED, RELAXATION OF EAST-WEST TENSION IS HELD TO FACILITATE SOVIET STRATEGIES, MANY OF THEM ANTI-WESTERN, IN OTHER AREAS.

13. IN SHORT, THE MATRIX OF BASIC SOVIET POLICIES CALLS FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" WITH THE U.S., AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN SUCH FIELDS AS DISARMAMENT AND TRADE, EVEN THOUGH INTERNATIONAL TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MAY INCREASE FROM TIME TO TIME BECAUSE OF SOVIET ACTIONS IN OTHER AREAS (AS DURING THE VIETNAM AND ANGOLAN WARS). ONE OF THE KEY TASKS OF SOVIET DIPLOMACY IS TO PRESERVE "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" AND TO MINIMIZE TENSION WITH THE UNITED STATES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME IMPLEMENTING POLICIES DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY DETRIMENTAL TO U.S. INTERESTS.

14. THE RESULTANT CONTEXT FOR U.S. POLICY, 1977-80. THE TWELVE YEARS OF BREZHNEV'S ASCENDANCY HAVE BEEN MARKED BY CONTINUITY AND CONSENSUS. ALTHOUGH SOME FRUSTRATION WITH BREZHNEV AND HIS POLICIES UNDOUBTEDLY HAS BEEN GENERATED WITHIN THE USSR DURING THIS PERIOD, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE A DOMESTIC CRISIS STEMMING FROM PLITICAL SUCCESSION OR OTHER INTERNAL CAUSES OF A MAGNITUDE WHICH WOULD IN THE COMING FOUR YEARS DEFLECT SOVIET DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN POLICY VERY FAR FROM ITS PRESENT PATH. THE BREZHNEV
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POLICY OF "RELAXATION OF TENSION" WITH THE U.S. SEEMS PARTICULARLY DURABLE, PRIMARILY BECAUSE, FROM THE SOVIET PERSPECTIVE, IT:

-- CLEARLY TRACES BACK TO THE 20TH CPSU CONGRESS OF 1956 AND THUS HAS SOLID HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL ROOTS WHICH PREDATE THE BREZHNEV YEARS (CRITICISM OF KHRUSHCHEV SINCE HIS OUSTER IN 1964 HAS NEVER TOUCHED THE DOCTRINAL AND POLICY CHANGES OR THE DE-STALINIZATION ACCOMPLISHED AT THE 20TH CONGRESS UNDER KHRUSHCHEV'S LEADERSHIP);

-- IS DOMESTICALLY POPULAR, LARGELY BECAUSE IT ASSUAGES WIDESPREAD CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER CATASTROPHIC WAR ON (OR OVER) SOVIET TERRITORY;

--STRENGTHENS THE USSR'S POSTURE VIS-A-VIS CHINA,
IN THAT IT THWARTS THOSE IN THE U.S. INCLINED TO JOIN
WITH CHINA IN A MENACING ANTI-SOVIET COALITION;
-- FACILITATES NEGOTIATION OF ARMS LIMITATION
AGREEMENTS DESIRED BY MOSCOW TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD
OF NUCLEAR WAR AS WELL AS TO RE-ALLOCATE ECONOMIC RESOURCES
INTERNALLY;

-- FACILITATES OTHER SOVIET POLICIES IN EASTERN
AND WESTERN EUROPE AND IN THE THIRD WORLD; AND

--FACILITATES THE SOVIET UNION'S ACCESS TO SORELY
NEEDED U.S. TECHNOLOGY.

15. WHEN IT FINALLY TAKES PLACE, POLITICAL SUCCESSION
MAY INVOLVE A PERIOD OF REDUCED FOREIGN POLICY ACTIVITY,
AS THE NEW MEN AT THE TOP ATTEMPT TO RE-ESTABLISH INTERNAL
POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM. SHOULD INTENSE POLITICAL MANEUVERING
ENSUE, HOWEVER, WE COULD SEE AT LEAST TACTICAL FOREIGN POLICY
SHIFTS GENERATED BY A STRUGGLE FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL ASCENDANCY.
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MOREOVER, WE CAN READILY FORESEE POSSIBLE CHANGES IN POLICY
EMPHASIS BY NEW PERSONALITIES AND A NEW BALANCE OF POLITICAL
INTERESTS AT THE TOP OF A POST-BREZHNEV LEADERSHIP. FOR THE
U.S., THE WORST CASE PROBABLY
WOULD BE A STRONGER VOICE FOR PARTY IDEOLOGUES, THE
MILITARY AND THE KGB. THIS IN TURN COULD RESULT IN
HIGHER TOLERANCE FOR TEMPORARY INCREASES IN U.S.-SOVIET
TENSION, WHEN IN THE EYES OF THE LEADERSHIP THIS IS
REQUIRED TO ADVANCE FUNDAMENTAL GOALS SUCH AS ENSURING
CONFORMITY WITHIN THE "SOCIALIST SYSTEM", ACCELERATING
NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES, "OR "RESTRAINING
IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION". THE BEST CASE PROBABLY WOULD
INVOLVE A STRONGER VOICE FOR RELATIVELY NON-IDEOLOGICAL
TECHNOCRATS WHO PERCEIVE A NEED TO INCREASE IMPORTS OF
WESTERN TECHNOLOGY, WHO UNDERSTAND THE ECONOMIC AND
NATIONAL SECURITY BENEFITS OF ARMS LIMITATION, AND
WHO ARE RELATIVELY MORE INCLINED TO DEFER OR DEEMPHASIZE
POLICIES WHICH WOULD INCREASE EAST-WEST TENSION.

16. OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES. OUR SURVEY OF THE USSR
OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS SUGGESTS THAT WE WILL CONTINUE
TO ENJOY LEVERAGE ON SOVIET POLICY AND PRACTICE, THANKS
PRIMARILY TO OUR GREATER OVERALL ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND
TO OUR MUCH GREATER RELEVANCY TO THIRD WORLD CONCERNS
AS WELL AS TO THE CONCERNS OF INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES.
IN ADDITION, AS MUCH AS IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO REDUCE
U.S.- SOVIET TENSION AND MOVE AHEAD WITH ARMS LIMITATION,
THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WILL, AS SUGGESTED EARLIER,
CONTINUE TO HAVE EVEN A GREATER NEED FOR "RELAXATION

OF TENSION" WITH US. AS WE SEE IT, SPECIFIC POINTS OF
ADVANTAGE OR LEVERAGE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

--UNLIKELY TO REDUCE SIGNIFICANTLY, THEIR RELATIVE ECONOMIC
AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFERIORITY DURING 1977-80, THE SOVIETS
WILL BE ANXIOUS TO BE SEEN AS CO-EQUAL WITH THE UNITED
STATES AND THUS WILL BE INTERESTED IN HIGHLY VISIBLE
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JOINT VENTURES AND HIGH-LEVEL VISITS, INCLUDING SUMMITRY;

-- THE USSR WILL REMAIN KEENLY INTERESTED IN
DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS, BOTH TO DIMINISH THE
CHANCES OF EAST-WEST ARMED CONFLICT AND TO FREE SCARCE SOVIET
RESOURCES FOR OTHER USES;

-- SOVIET CONCERN OVER CHINA IS UNLIKELY TO DIMINISH
IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS;

-- AS THE DYNAMICS OF ITS OWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
INCREASINGLY DICTATE EMPHASIS ON INTENSIVE RATHER THAN
EXTENSIVE GROWTH, THE USSR WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK ACCESS
TO U.S. TECHNOLOGY AND KNOW-HOW;

--DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE POLICY OF "RELAXATION
OF TENSION," AS THEY DEFINE IT, SOVIET LEADERS WILL WANT
TO PROJECT AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IMAGE OF SUCCESSFUL
POLICY; THE KREMLIN THUS WILL BE SENSITIVE
TO CRITICISM THAT ITS ACTIONS HAVE RAISED INTERNATIONAL
TENSION, ARE CONTRARY TO THE USSR'S INTERNATIONAL
COMMITMENTS, AND HAVE MOVED THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP
BACK TOWARD CONFRONTATION;

--CONCERNED TO PROJECTED ITS SELF-IMAGE AS THE
WORLD'S "MOST HUMANE" SOCIETY, MOSCOW WILL BE SENSITIVE
TO CRITICISM HIGHLIGHTING ITS DOMESTIC SHORTCOMINGS,
PARTICULARLY IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD.

17. OUR CHALLENGE IS TO MAXIMIZE THIS POTENTIAL LEVERAGE
(WHETHER BY LINKAGE OR BY PARALLEL ACTION ON SEPARATE
FRONTS, AS THE TACTICAL SITUATION REQUIRES) IN ORDER
TO MOVE THE SOVIET UNION TOWARD LESS OPPORTUNISTIC,
LESS DE-STABILIZING INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR AS WELL AS
TOWARD MORE HUMANE DOMESTIC POLICIES. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE,
CHIEF AMONG THE CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF
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LEVERAGE ARE:

(A) THE CRITICALITY OF TIMING, I.E., OF RECOGNIZING

AND EXPLOITING THE OPTIMUM "NEGOTIATING WINDOW" WHICH, ON KEY ISSUES, TENDS TO CLOSE WHEN THE SOVIETS FEEL TOO WEAK TO NEGOTIATE ON AN EQUAL BASIS, AND WHICH MAY AGAIN CLOSE IF THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THEY HAVE BECOME STRONG ENOUGH TO IMPOSE THEIR TERMS; THE TRICK, AS CURRENTLY ILLUSTRATED BY SALT, IS TO ESTIMATE WHEN MOSCOW IS CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO NEGOTIATE BUT DOES NOT PERCEIVE A NEAR-TERM PROSPECT OF GAINING SUPERIORITY;

(B) THE DIFFICULTY OF APPLYING ENOUGH PRESSURE TO MOVE THE SOVIETS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, WITHOUT OVERDOING IT AND IN EFFECT BREAKING A LEVER ALTOGETHER; AN OBVIOUS CASE IN POINT IS THE HISTORY OF THE JACKSON-VANIK AND STEVENSON AMENDMENTS, WHERE SOVIET RESISTANCE STEMMING FROM CONCERN OVER PUBLICIZED "DISCRIMINATION" AND "INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS" IN THE END SEVERELY LIMITED OUR LEVERAGE ON EMIGRATION POLICY;

(C) THE ENORMOUS GAP BETWEEN THE SOVIET HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE AND WORLD OUTLOOK ON THE ONE HAND, AND OUR OWN ON THE OTHER, WHICH MEANS THAT:

(1) WE WILL HAVE TO TAKE CAREFUL ACCOUNT OF SOVIET MISPERCEPTIONS WHILE SEEKING TO MODERATE THE DEEP-SEATED ATTITUDES WHICH GENERATE THEM;

(2) THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO BE COMPLEX AND UNEVEN, AS THE KREMLIN ATTEMPTS TO PURSUE RELAXATION OF EAST-WEST TENSION AT THE SAME TIME AS IT ENGAGES IN "CLASS STRUGGLE" AGAINST "IMPERIALISM" AND RENDERS SUPPORT TO "PROGRESSIVE FORCES" IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD;

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(3) IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO EXPLAIN THE CONTRADICTORY NATURE OF THIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE CONGRESS, AND HENCE DIFFICULT TO AVOID SET-BACKS TO THE RELATIONSHIP CAUSED BY U.S. MISCONCEPTIONS TO IT.

18. OUR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1977-80, IN THE LIGHT OF THESE BROAD CONSIDERATIONS, WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF SEPARATE MESSAGES.

19. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, US
To: n/a INFO RUEHSD PEKING MULTIPLE
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